



ENIGMA

Otago Mental Health Support Trust News and views on mental health

SPRING 2017 EDITION

This newsletter was put together by the staff of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust. Editor: Grant Cooper

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DISCLAIMER

The opinions and articles expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Otago Mental Health Support Trust or anyone associated with the organisation

We welcome your feedback on our newsletter. See above for contact details.

Mental Health Awareness Week

The local theme for Mental Health Awareness Week is “Keep learning” in relation to one of the “5 Ways to Wellbeing” promoted by the Mental Health Foundation.

So what do we need to “Keep learning” about? In relation to mental health we need to listen more to people’s stories. Everyone has their own story. Taking the time to get to know people is so important. The way I see the world is a combination of my personality and my experiences in the world. Sometimes the way I see the world is the way I expect other people to see the world. This often comes to the fore when I wonder why someone sees things differently from me. “Why are they doing that for? I wouldn’t do it that way.” But of course I am not the other person and their worldview is different from mine. In fact, we all have a unique worldview.

So each of us has a unique world view and therefore it is not surprising that each person’s experiences of mental distress are also unique. In peer support work it is important not to think that my experience of distress will automatically be the same as someone else’s. If we can encourage people to tell their story and you tell your story in ways that are supportive, we can recognise differences but we are also more likely to recognise possible similarities. These can be described as “aha moments!” when we get someone. These are great opportunities to promote understanding and build connection.

The opening event for Mental Health Awareness Week is about people telling their own stories of mental distress and the distress they have seen in other people. My hope is that some of the speakers’ stories may connect with your own story at different points. Success will be if some people in the audience can experience some of those “aha moments.”

I would encourage everyone to be able to tell their own story. Debra Lampshire will be telling her story at the Mental Health Awareness Week opening. A little more about her is on page 2.

We also asked a couple of people “What do we need to know about mental health.”

We also profile “Books on Prescription” which is a great way to access resources on mental health though your local library in the region. Not just books, but videos and apps! A great way to “Keep learning!”

Also we feature an article I saw about farmer Doug Avery and his story and talking about “Keep learning.” It emphasises that learning is important for everyone – including people with experience of mental distress

We also give thanks to our Trustee Ian Williams who passed away recently (see the back page for our tribute).

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Debra Lampshire: Experienced-Based Expert



Debra has an extensive background as a mental health educator. Debra held the position of Consumer Consultant to Auckland District Health Board (ADHB) the largest in New Zealand, for five years, providing consumer advisory services. Debra made a substantial contribution to the evolution of consumer advisory services to the independent, professional and robust structure that it is today.

Debra is employed by Auckland District Health Board as a Project Manager for the psychological interventions for enduring mental illness project. In this unique and innovative position Debra works in the clinical setting leading the development of psychological strategies for positive symptoms of psychosis and is the first non-clinician to do so.

Debra is also a professional teaching fellow with The University of Auckland. Debra has both an academic and research role. Her work has been presented as key notes and workshops/symposia at numerous conferences both nationally and internationally.

Debra has transferred her 30 years of the lived experience of recovery, voice hearing and the shared experiences of the consumers she has worked with, into a wealth of knowledge that is collaborative, interactive and empowering. She is a prominent leader and mentor to others within the service-user and clinical movement in New Zealand and a well know trainer, educator, writer and advocate within national and international mental health services.

Debra is the current Chairperson for ISPS (International Society for Psychological and Social approaches to Psychosis) New Zealand and a member of the executive committee for ISPS international.

Farmer Shares Depression Story

(Source: Stuff 18/9/17)

Recently awarded a MNZM Queen's Birthday honour in recognition of his services to agriculture and mental health, charismatic Marlborough farmer Doug Avery shared his powerful story in Central Hawke's Bay recently.

More than 380 people heard how Doug weathered years of drought and desperation and overcame heart-breaking adversity to live a fruitful life and help others.

The Avery family runs Bonavaree Farm at Grassmere, South Marlborough. The farm has been owned by the family since 1919 so they have a deep understanding of the land and how it is shaped by the weather.

The eight-year drought, however, took a personal toll on Doug Avery and he suffered terribly during those long, dry years. Doug's farm was depleted and so was he - to the point of severe depression.

"There's a huge difference between a broken leg and a broken mind. A broken leg is obvious to everyone, whereas a broken mind is invisible and can represent such a lonely journey - but I realised it doesn't need to be if the safety net is in place."

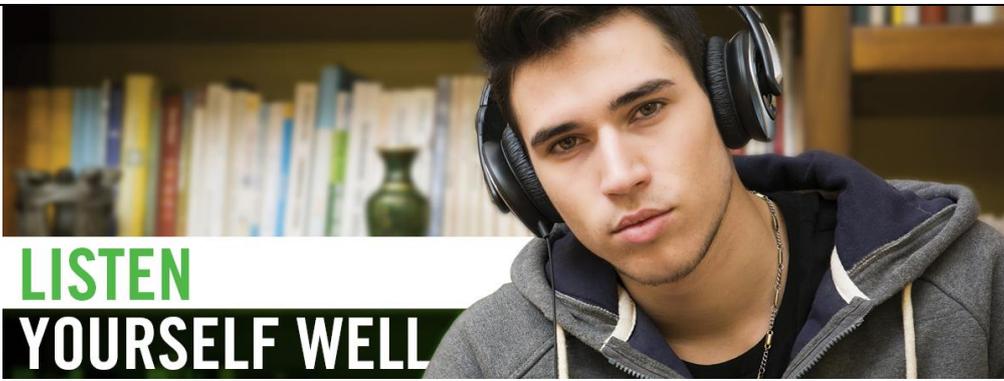
"The saddest part of it all is that anyone suffering from depression will become the master of disguise and hide it - which I did," he said.

Doug referred to depression not as a weakness but an illness which affects some of the most amazing thinkers of this country.

He talked about the importance of early intervention and emphasised the need to grow your emotional resilience.

"Resilience is a journey of travel and you can keep building and building resilience and we need to keep learning."

Everyone experiences some form of disruption in their lives and Doug pointed out the importance of how we address disruption - do we turn away or do we join together and work together. He encouraged everyone to invest more time in themselves so they can be there for others.



LISTEN YOURSELF WELL

Read, Listen or T-App Yourself Well

www.booksonprescription.co.nz

Books on Prescription is a collection of high quality, professionally reviewed resources, which aim to help you understand, manage and improve your health.

- There are videos, podcasts and smartphone apps available online.
- There is also a book collection available through the public, tertiary education and prison libraries.

Health topics include anxiety, diabetes, depression, heart disease, lifestyle choices, stress and more!

Kia Ora Mental Health Fact Sheets

Downloadable resources specifically for health professionals to use as conversation starters with patients/clients. Designed for health professionals to start a conversation around mental health and wellbeing. The fact sheets aim to improve mental health literacy by facilitating better understanding of mental health issues, normalising conversations about mental health and making treatment options clear.

*Kia Ora Fact sheets can be found under
"Professional Resources" on the Books on Prescription website.*

For more information or to order promotional resources contact WellSouth's Health Promotion Team on 03 477 1163 or health.promotion@wellsouth.org.nz

Women's Group is held on the last Friday of every month.

This is a friendly informal meeting giving an opportunity for women to make new friends, and share experiences.

1-3pm meet at our rooms, Queens Building, 109 Princes Street.

We wish to thank the following for their financial support:

**Bendigo Valley Trust, COGS Coastal Otago/Waitaki, Dunedin Casino Charitable Trust,
Dunedin City Council, HealthCare Otago, Lotteries Otago/Southland Community,
Ministry of Social Development, Otago Community Trust, Southern District Health Board**

We asked a couple of people with lived experience of mental distress...

“What do we need to learn about mental health?”

Here are their responses below:

Connecting with People

My area of continual learning in the area of Mental Health is the value of connecting with people. When I am at my lowest and most anxious it is easy to hide in my home. But it is at this time that I have to remind myself to connect, even though sometimes this is only by text. The area I wish other people would take the opportunity to learn about is the value of peer lead support groups. This is something that has grown here in Oamaru over the last four years thanks to Grant and the Team getting us started. At times the meeting is the only reason for some of us to leave our homes, and at other times it is a great reminder that we are not alone or so very different.

Carron

A Childs View. BE OPEN WITH CHILDREN

As a child of 6-7 coming home from school on my own, with my solo mum, she would say “hush, they can hear you”. There was no one within earshot, and I couldn’t understand the comment. I wasn’t allowed to leave the room as “they might get me.” Now I was really scared and remember crying. When my older brother arrived home he said “Oh not again” and told me to run for Auntie Liz.

I was told to stay at Auntie Liz’s. Next thing I knew I was staying with Aunt Liz for a while. I was told mum had to go to hospital. I had realised in the past that 3 things were taboo to be discussed in our puritanical family: sex, death and mental illness. I believed that babies were delivered to the hospital and mum just picked them up. Over the year I spent with Aunt Liz I could get no further than “she will be back soon.” I really had no idea whether she would come home in a pine box with a new baby or those funny brown spots on her temple, which I now know were a result of E.C.T. This scenario happened almost annually until I was 12-13 years old.

The nights that I have laid awake either crying, or terrified that “they “might come for me left me with:

- Inability to concentrate at school
- A tremor that I carry to this day
- A lack of confidence that I only overcame in my 50’s

I realise now of course that mum suffered bouts of Schizophrenia and there really are no bogeymen other than those in her tortured mind. The story ends well with mum “burning out “of the illness. I went on to social work- mainly in mental illness and housing people recovering from mental illness, for which I was made a Member of the Order of New Zealand.

I will repeat now what I said to the Governor General as he gave me the award “The real heroes are those people that battle day to day with this burden, while most lead a full life and care for others they should all get a medal”

Unsigned and dedicated to all those children from whom the truth is kept.



In Memoriam: Ian Williams

Ian Williams passed away in August this year. He has been involved with the Otago Mental Health Support Trust for more than 18 years and over 9 years as Chairperson. Board and Staff would like to publically acknowledge Ian for all the support and leadership he gave the Trust over many years. A number of Board and staff attended Ian’s funeral. Marian Hobbs who is our current Chairperson spoke about Ian and captured his tenacity and dedication that we all admired. He will be sorely missed. Our condolences to his wife Dawn and the wider family.

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